



**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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NEW POST 9/11 GI BILL GOES INTO EFFECT

The new GI Bill (Chapter 33), or as many are calling it, the “Post 9/11 GI Bill” is said to be the most comprehensive education benefits package since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944. This new GI Bill is set to go into effect on August 1, 2009. However, as with any new legislation not all guidelines have been finalized and it could take some time for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to begin paying benefits.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is for service members with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days of active duty service. Service members must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Post-9/11 GI Bill will become effective for training on or after August 1, 2009.

This bill goes well beyond helping to pay for tuition. Veterans who qualify will receive tuition and fees, payable up to the highest amount charged by a State supported school, a new monthly housing stipend, based on the zip code of the school they are attending, and up to a \$1,000 a year stipend for books and supplies. The payment amounts are percentage based on the amount of time spent on active duty.

The South Dakota Division of Veteran Affairs would like to remind all Veterans, that the final guidelines for the “New GI Bill” are still being developed by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Veterans need to heed caution before electing to use the Post 9/11 GI Bill over other GI Bill programs. The information coming from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs is ever changing, and some policies and procedures are still not in place. Due to this uncertainty the South Dakota Division of Veteran Affairs, has been very prudent about the release of information pertaining to the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

“For over 65 years we have been assisting our South Dakota veterans and their families on all matters concerning their entitlement to veterans programs,” said George Summerside, acting director of the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs. “Our agency continues to be involved nationally, regionally and locally to advance and promote the cause of the veterans who wish to utilize their GI Bill benefits. We encourage all veterans to review the program criteria and base their decision upon their respective situation, considering career goals before electing the financial aspects.”

“Electing to utilize the new GI bill as their avenue for funding, before being presented with all answers to the questions, may be irrevocable and may have adverse affects on the benefits received,” said Shane Olivier, Education Program Specialist for the Division of Veterans Affairs.

“These young men and women deserve the very best programs and services this country can provide and we must ask that they be vigilant when making their decisions,” said Summerside. “Our staff has been posing many questions to the Department of Veterans Affairs and we believe veterans need and deserve the answers to these questions before they make a lifetime option.”

County and Tribal Veteran Service Officers were briefed on this issue, as well as other veteran benefit programs during the South Dakota Division of Veteran Affairs Mini Conferences held last week in Watertown, Mitchell, Pierre and Rapid City.

Individuals can review details about the bill and make application on–line at www.GIBILL.VA.gov. Before electing the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, veterans are urged to contact their local Veteran Service Officer or Shane Olivier at the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs (605-773-3648) for more information.

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